AMERICAN FEDERATION OF LABOR

WEEKLY NEWS SERVICE

The A. F. of L. Weekly News Service gives a brief summary of important matters affecting labor, occurring in the industrial, legislative and judicial fields, and such other information that will benefit the trade union movement.

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The secret of success is constancy of purpose.—Disraeli.

WHOLE NO. 1161 | WILLIAM GREEN, President | WASHINGTON, D. C., SATURDAY, JULY 8, 1933 | FRANK MORRISON, Secretary | VOL. 23, NO. 18

Green Condemns Government Policy Of Firing Thousands of Employes

A. F. of L. Chief Says Wholesale Dismissal of Federal Workers Violates Principle of Industrial Recovery Law to Increase Employment in Private Industry by Reducing Hours of Labor—Urges Thirty-Hour Week for Government Service to Make Dismissals Unnecessary.

Washington.—The wholesale dismissal and furlough of thousands of Government employes starting with the new fiscal year was vigorously condemned by William Green, president of the American Federation of Labor, in a statement on the unparalleled situation thrust upon so many Federal government workers.

Emphasizing the anomaly that while the Government through the Industrial Recovery Act is endeavoring to decrease unemployment in private industry by reducing the hours of work it is increasing the number of the jobless by its inconsistent policy of nation-wide dismissals of its own employes, Mr. Green urged the application of the thirty-hour week to all Government establishments. This policy he believes would make separations from Government employment unnecessary.

The text of Mr. Green's statement follows:

Retrenchment Hits Workers

"Federal employes are being furloughed and dismissed by thousands. Washington and other centers where workers are employed in the Federal service are now feeling the full effect of the Government's retrenchment economic policy.

"In the first place, Government workers were forced to accept a 15 per cent reduction under the provisions of the Economy Act. Now they are being furloughed and dismissed in large numbers. This adds to the gravity and seriousness of the national unemployment situation.

"Through the Industrial Recovery Act the Federal Government is endeavoring to strike at the vital spot of unemployment; it is seeking through the application and operation of the Industrial Recovery Law to reduce the hours of work in private industry so that the slack of unemployment may be taken up and to increase wages so that the buying power of the masses may be greatly increased.

Government Increases Unemployment

"On the other hand, the Federal Government is increasing unemployment by dismissing Government workers by the thousands, and reducing buying power through reductions in wages and salaries, and dismissals and furloughs.

"Here is presented a truly paradoxical situation. Consistency would require that the Government, which after all is the largest employer of labor, should conform to the spirit as well as the law of the Industrial Recovery Act; it ought to lead in reducing hours for its employes, in creating work opportunities and in raising wages; it ought to set an example for employers in private industry.

Urges Thirty-Hour, Five-Day Week

"The six-hour day and the five-day week week in Government service would very greatly increase employment opportunities and would in all probability make wholesale dismissals and furloughs unnecessary.

"The furloughs imposed will cause great hardship to many persons, but the dismissals will inflict an almost irreparable injury upon numerous families.

"To be dismissed from Federal service during a great emergency when millions of workers associated with private industry are unemployed, and when it is well-nigh impossible to secure work in other lines, means that hope in many instances for the abandonment of suffering will become intense.

"But those who are dismissed from the Government service will not suffer alone. Business and professional interests closely related to Government employes and dependent upon them in very large measure for success, will feel the economic effects of reduced buying power caused through reductions in wages and dismissals from employment imposed upon Government workers. In this respect, whole communities will suffer together.

Abandon Dismissal Policy

"For humane as well as economic reasons the policy of Government dismissals of Federal employes ought to be immediately abandoned.

"Labor has done all it could to prevent the adoption and pursuit of this inhuman, unsound economic policy. It protests vigorously against it. Public opinion ought to be aroused in opposition to the imposition of what seems to labor to be a great injustice to Federal employes."

Thousands of Miners Joining Mine Workers Union, Lewis Says

Liberated from Gangster Methods of Operators Prohibited by Industrial Recovery Law, 100 Per Cent Organization of Non-union Fields Is Achieved

Washington.—Freed by the National Industrial Recovery Act from the gangster methods employed against trade unionists by many bituminous coal operators, the United Mine Workers of America has so thoroughly organized the miners in the bituminous field that the union is now prepared to enter into collective bargaining with the operators for the determination of a fair competition code, including maximum hours and minimum wage rates.

This is the substance of a report on the progress of organization made by John L. Lewis, president of the United Mine Workers, to General Hugh S. Johnson, National Recovery Administrator.

Mr. Lewis's report is the forerunner of similar documents showing the results of the organization campaign which the American Federation of Labor launched with the signing of the Industrial Recovery Act.

In a statement outlining the contents of his communication to General Johnson, Mr. Lewis said:

Big Jump In Union Members

"Now that the Industrial Recovery Law gives them the unquestioned right to organize and bargain collectively through representatives of their own choosing for wages and working conditions, mine workers everywhere are joining the United Mine Workers of America by the tens of thousands.

"This is true in Pennsylvania, West Virginia, Ohio, Illinois, Maryland, Kentucky, Tennessee, Alabama, Missouri, Arkansas, Oklahoma, Colorado, Utah, Montana, Washington, Wyoming, New Mexico—in fact, in every field that heretofore was unorganized or partly organized. And this progress is also reflected in such fully organized districts as Illinois, Indiana, Iowa and others.

100 Per Cent Organized

"Central Pennsylvania is 100 per cent organized, with a local union at every mine in the district. The Pittsburgh district is practically 100 per cent organized. Westmoreland County, Pa., Ohio, Northern Panhandle of West Virginia